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The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, January 29 1695.

Queſt. 1. *MAY a marryed woman capable of Children, Lawfully avoid or prevent having Iſſue ?*

Anſw. No, St. *Paul* tells us, that neither Husband nor Wife have power over their own bodies: and to uſe means, whilſt we prevent their taking effect, is a mocking of God Almighty.

Queſt. 2. *It being my Employment to receive and pay money, I have lately received 3 or 4 l. over and above the exact Sums I was to have ; but in what parcel, I know not juſtly ; but have acquainted the perſon with it whom I thought it moſt likely I ſhould have it from, who knows nothing of it, nor miſſes any money. Thus he being* wholly ignorant *about it, and I not certain I had it of him, I deſire your Judgment ,whether or no* I may lawfully *keep it ?*

Anſw. You may; ſince,we think, at preſent you have a greater Right to it, by poſſeſſing it, than any perſon that can lay no claim at all: Yet ought you to do what you can to diſcover who has committed the miſtake ; and if you can find it out, deliver up your charge ; but if not, 'tis all your own, though perhaps 'twas done rather by way of Trial than Overſight.

Queſt. 3. *Whether a man may not, in ſome caſes, do* evil that good may come on't ? *As, Two perſons, whom Nature and Art ſeemed to have done their utmoſt to accompliſh, fell in Love with each other : but Fortune proving* extreamly niggardly *to them both, and they entirely affecting each other, could propoſe no leſs than that the greateſt miſery would attend their* Matrimony, *and* purely *upon that account they deferred it ſome years, in the mean time endeavouring their utmoſt to fall into* ſome way, &c. *But finding no proſpect of* any thing, *the Gentleman at laſt grew* carelesly deſperate, *running into all Extravagancies, as Drinking,* &c. *to drive his cares away. She took a better courſe, devoting her ſelf to Piety, and wholly depending upon Providence for a Proviſion ; and in this* only they diſagreed. *At laſt it happen'd,that* they were perſonally ſeparated *a conſiderable diſtance from each other , but ſtill continued their* Amourous Correſpondency by Letters, &c. *Alſo he remain'd in his courſe of Drunkenneſs and Debauchery ; Inſomuch , that he had contracted ſuch debts that he* hourly *expected the Effects of his Extravagancies, and nothing but a Priſon for his portion. But Fortune at the ſame time unhappily preſenting a perſon to him, who propoſing upon marriage to maintain him, ſet him clear of the World, and keep the Wolf from the door for the future. In this Neceſſity and Diſtraction, he marries her, and accordingly ſhe proves a conſiderable Fortune ; and could he have forgot his firſt Love, he might have thought himſelf happy in her. His former Miſtriſs knowing nothing of his being married, but meeting him lately, propoſed both* Matrimony, *and a method for their maintenance ; at the ſame time uſing ſuch pious Arguments, to win him from his Debaucheries, and to ſet his mind on a future ſtate, that his Conſcience tells him,* that for his Soul's ſake he can do no leſs than live with her; *For his* Body's ſake, *he muſt not be guilty of* Bigamy, *eſpecially if known : Beſides, 'twill be* Ingratitude in him *to leave his Wife: Whereupon riſes the* Queſtion *above,* viz. Whether he had not better do Evil in theſe caſes,that he may be in a ſtate of ſalvation, than lead a diſſatisfied Life in this World, and incur eternal Damnation hereafter ? *This is his true Caſe, upon which he deſires your* Opinion.

Anſw. The Prohibition is poſitive,and makes no exception in his caſe, any more than in another. Nor can we ſee what ſalvation he can propoſe to himſelf by breaking both the Laws of God and Man: And he that has committed ſo many crimes and follies already will find enough to repent of without any new additions. But beſides,his pious Miſtris,who only is to be pity'd, wou'd not, undoubtedly admit of any ſuch propoſal after ſhe ſhall know he has already given away himſelf. On the contrary whilſt their ſeeing each other becomes prejudicial to his wife by leſſening that love in gratitude he owes her,ſhe'll probably refrain the being any occaſion of diverting him from that duty ſhe perſwades him to. All he has now left himſelf the liberty of doing is to beg her pardon for his unfaithfulneſs, and never to ſee her more till he can do it innocently without breaking his marriage-vow. For if e're he expects to be happy, he muſt become a good husband, ſince Chriſtianity requires us preciſely to obſerve the duties of every relation.

Queſt. 4. *How came the Houſe of* Auſtria *to pretend that the Title of King of* Hungary *belonged to them, and after what manner did they get it confirm'd ?*

Anſw. In the year 1687. the Emperour of *Germany* having aſſembled together all the ſtates of *Hungary* at *Presbourg*, declared to them that he deſigned to place the Crown of *Hungary* upon the prince his Son, and told them they ought to confirm his Nomination without ſtaying for the common formalities that they were accuſtomed to uſe in the Election of their Kings, becauſe the expences that the houſe of *Auſtria* had been at to defend that Country againſt the *Turks*, gave him a right to look upon *Hungary* as upon the reſt of his inheritances. Upon the making of this propoſition to the States,the Earl *Nicholas Draſcowitz*, great Judge of the Court of *Hungary*, repreſented to them the conſequences of the Ceſſion,adviſed them to preſerve their antient priveleges and to refuſe the offer. Whereupon they declared their reaſons to the Emperour ; and deſired him to conſent that they ſhou'd not change their antient Cuſtoms: But his Imperial Majeſty continued firm in his reſolution, and told them again, that *Hungary* had coſt him more than it was worth, and after having bought it ſo dearly, it was very juſt that it ſhou'd be hereditary to his houſe. And the Earl *Draſcowitz* who moſt ſtrongly oppoſed it, a little after dying ſuddainly in the Night, without the cauſe of it being well known, thoſe who were of the ſame opinion with him, were ſo frighten'd at his death,that no body durſt openly oppoſe the Emperour's, Will any longer; wherefore in thefollowing aſſembly of the States, they declared, that henceforth the Kingdom of *Hungary* ſhou'd be hereditary to the Houſe of *Auſtria*, of the imperial branch; that for want of heirs Male it ſhou'd paſs to the daughters ; and in defect of both, it ſhou'd firſt belong to the princes and afterwards to the princeſſes of the branch of *Spain*.

Queſt. 5. *Why is the learning of the tongues in ſo little repute ; and perſons ſo difficultly perſwaded to it ?*

Anſw. By confeſſing that the knowledge of words is nothing in it ſelf, we might eaſily perſwade that without it we cannot come to know things ; but whilſt we ſpeak as if we believed that to be acquainted with many words, altho it neither conduced to good ſenſe nor helpt the underſtanding, was an eſtimable thing, few perſons will be induced to ſtudy the Languages. And this ſeems to be one of the chief reaſons why it is ſo much neglected at preſent : For 'tis very probable 'twou'd be otherwiſe if thoſe who apply themſelves to it, did not appear ſo much to eſteem this knowledge for it ſelf, which 'tis very plain ought only to be conſider'd

fer'd so far as it may conduce to the understanding of things, and assist us with the means to form the mind, by helping us to converse with all Nations notwithstanding the distance of time and place.

Quest. 5. I have been about eight years married, and by my husband's and my industry we have acquired a considerable Portion of worldly Goods; and I have a Sister that is under sad circumstances, whom with her family I am obliged to maintain, else they could not subsist; I have likewise a Father and Mother who threaten to Curse me if I don't maintain them (Whereas I know they have enough of their own to do it very decently) and let my Sister go a begging. So I desire you would be Candidly pleased to give me your opinion, whether my Parents Curse may be justly inflicted upon me?

Answ. By no means; for if they have a handsome subsistance 'tis sufficient; but you are obliged in duty to relieve them that really want. Yet as 'tis a father and mother to whom, how unreasonable so ever they may be, you still bear some respect, you ought to deny them very submissively, if you cannot allow them any thing without prejudicing your sister.

Quest. 6. A man having courted a young Woman for considerable time, and made a great many protestations of Eternal Faith and Sincerity; one Sunday Night he and Two of his brethren forcibly carry'd her to a Church, where the Reader said part of the Matrimony to them, tho they had No Ring: After which they return'd her as they found her, every one going to his own home. A year after his father's servant had a child by him, upon which the young woman came to London and has never seen him since altho it is seven years, and only heard once from him about two years ago, which letter was only to know if she was well, without any mention of what had past. She desires to know if she may not honestly marry another?

Answ. It seems in this pretended marriage there was neither her consent, a Ring, nor any further consummation, all which were necessary to make it valid. Therefore she may e'ne marry in earnest as soon as she can get any one in the mind.

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